

VIII

So Bukowski, keep it up, none of it matters, none of it ... Dreiser was just as crazy, Dickens died in a paroxysm of excitement acting out his murder scenes on stage, O'Neill drank as much ...

You are no carbon.

-- David Evanier

Santa Monica CA

DOGS, A CONQUERING-HERO DAYDREAM

This spring my dog pretends hip displasia. The huge fool drags his ass up the porch and begs for a cortisone shot. I love him, but I know when something is out for sympathy, and I kick him onto the lawn. But he won't rise. He offers a limp paw, trembles, makes his eyes glassy and rolls them back in his head. Finally, so that he won't die just to get my attention, I push him onto a blanket, pick up the corners, and heave him into the back of my station wagon. He moans the whole twelve twisting miles to the vet and then, when we get there, hears all the dogs, forgets he is sick, leaps over the tailgate and starts a fight with a Pekinese. The vet stares while I insist that my dog was completely crippled.

So I take the cortisone shot, get into the back of the station wagon, and my dog cheerfully drives us home, barking and waving at other dogs, stops once to run over and shit on the fire chief's lawn, while carefully my face elongates, my ears and teeth sharpen, hair grows all over my arms, and when we get home, before he can try any more tricks, I leap at him and easily finish him off there in the driveway. Then, after carefully weighing the alternatives, the probable taste of dog food, the short life span, the effect on my wife and department chairman, sleeping under the porch, the chance of distemper, I argue myself back onto two legs, shake the fur off and walk over to my mint julep, my other dogs and my cat laughing affectionately, my own hips rolling oilily on their sockets. I ease into the sofa of my options.